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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

HONORING RICHARD MACRAVEY OF COLORADO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my mentor and close friend, Mr. Richard D. "Dick" MacRavey. After 26 years of service as the Secretary and Executive Director of the Colorado Water Congress, Dick is announcing his retirement. Throughout his tenure, Dick helped enact a multitude of important legislation to protect water resources throughout Colorado. As Executive Director, Dick saw 350 of the 419 Colorado Water Congress supported bills enacted into law. In addition, only one of the 123 bills opposed by the Colorado Water Congress became law. This impressive record demonstrates Dick's effective leadership and dedication to protecting Colorado's water.

During my time in the Colorado State Legislature, Dick took me under his wing and taught me a great deal about water legislation. As a farmer and lifelong resident of the San Luis Valley, I understand the importance of water. This precious resource is our lifeblood and essential to maintaining our way of life. Dick understood the needs of everyone—from farmers like me in rural Colorado to those in towns like Aspen, Carbondale, and Telluride and cities like Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs. With his guidance, I

helped craft a piece of legislation, "The Basin of Origin Protection," which I am very proud of. Although this bill was never enacted into law, the lessons that Dick taught me during this experience were invaluable. I will always consider Dick a great mentor and a friend.

Dick's dedication to protecting water and serving Colorado started long before his involvement with the Colorado Water Congress. He served 3 years as Executive Director to the Larimer-Weld Council of Governments and 7 years as Executive Director of the Colorado Municipal League. While at Larimer-Weld COG, Dick developed and guided the early stages of the Larimer-Weld "208" Water Quality Management Planning effort. In 1970, Dick served as chairman of the Colorado Good Government Committee for the promotion of the State constitutional amendments 1, Governors Cabinet; 2, State Civil Service Reorganization; and 3, Local Government Modernization. All three amendments were approved overwhelmingly by the people of Colorado. In addition, Dick was involved in six other statewide initiative campaigns and was successful in all six campaigns.

In 1988, Dick was appointed to Colorado Vision 2000, and in 1989, he was appointed to become part of the 16-member Legislative Council Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning for State Government. From 1969 to 1971, Dick served on the National League of Cities Board of Directors. He also served as a member of the Boards for the Colorado Water PAC and the Colorado Water Education Foundation. Dick is a member of the American Society of Association Executives, Colorado Society of Association Executives, American Water Works Association, and International City Management Association. Dick is one of Colorado's great leaders. He has been involved in many aspects of Colorado life and has worked

tirelessly to protect our current and future generations.

However, it is his tireless fight for water that has been most inspiring to me. In 1999, Dick was named the 19th recipient of the Wayne N. Aspinall Water Leader of the Year award. This is a prestigious award in Colorado named after a former Congressman of the district I currently represent. Mr. Aspinall was a water champion for Colorado and instrumental in helping to ensure that Colorado residents have access to a safe water supply.

After I was elected to the U.S. House in 2004, Dick gave me a biography entitled "Wayne Aspinall: Mr. Chairman." On the inside cover he wrote me an inspirational and encouraging message. It read:

To John Salazar. This book is about one of Colorado's great Members of Congress. You will some day also rank as one of the great members from Colorado. I have no doubts about your future achievement. Your friend, Dick MacRavey. January 27, 2005.

Madam Speaker, this note touched my heart, and I keep this book with me in my congressional office. While serving in Congress, I will continue to fight for Colorado's water, and I hope that my efforts will make Dick MacRavey proud.

I wish Dick well in his retirement, and I want him to know he will always have a special place in my heart.

HOPE FOR VISION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. RICHARDSON). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary work of Hope for Vision, a wonderful organization in my congressional district, as well as their two newest goodwill ambassadors, Alex and Stacy Campos. Both Hope for Vision,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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as well as the Campos family, serve our community with tremendous distinction.

As a member of the Congressional Vision Caucus, I am proud to work towards elevating awareness and finding solutions to the problems that surround vision loss and vision impairment. In this pursuit, there is no better partner than that of Hope for Vision.

Started in 2005, it amazes me every day just how much Hope for Vision has accomplished. In just 4 short but very successful years, Hope for Vision has been able to raise millions of dollars for the development of treatments and cures for blinding diseases. Finding a cure for degenerative blindness and other retinal diseases holds untold promises for new treatments and all types of visual disorders and beyond, which is so important to reduce the massive cost that our Nation suffers due to vision loss.

Vision loss and impairment not only have an extraordinary financial cost, but it also carries a deep personal cost as well. When individuals suffer the inability to see clearly, they must depend on others for help. Simple tasks like locating keys or avoiding obstacles in a walkway become virtually impossible without assistance. Literally left in the dark, a person's blindness becomes an entire family's responsibility.

This is compounded by the fact that the health care costs related to vision alone are more than \$67 billion annually, and this number will only increase as the population continues to grow and age. Hope for Vision understands these issues, and they know that the biggest challenge is ensuring that this crucial work is fully funded.

By far, the most impressive aspect of Hope for Vision is the fact that over 95 percent of the money raised is given directly to research at top academic institutions. And when it comes to the administration of success for Hope for Vision, few know better than that of Alex and Stacy Campos. These two champions of vision care have served selflessly for the benefit of our South Florida community. As well, they have truly afforded many in need the blessings of renewed sight.

As goodwill ambassador, Mr. Campos sits on the board of directors for Hope for Vision and utilizes his skills gained from the financial industry to make Hope for Vision as successful as it is today. Together with his wife, Stacy, and her continued participation in many charitable foundations, the work of the Campos family has provided Hope for Vision with the means it needs to grow and succeed even more.

Without a doubt, Mr. and Mrs. Campos satisfy the roles of goodwill ambassadors. Their relentless commitment to service and their passion to help families help themselves is truly worthy of distinction. It is because of their commitment to Hope for Vision and their fight against vision loss that countless families today enjoy the freedom of sight.

Alex and Stacy Campos have been a great resource for all at Hope for Vision, and our entire community has benefited from their partnership. Hope for Vision will be sure to maintain itself among the elite organizations working to fight against blindness and retina degenerative diseases through the actions of dedicated individuals like Alex and Stacy.

I again congratulate, Madam Speaker, Hope for Vision for the great work that this young organization has already done, and I look forward to hearing many good things in the years to come from Hope for Vision and all of the brave individuals involved in this fight for maintaining vision awareness for all of our community.

□ 1045

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes. Mr. CONNOLLY from Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the continuing success of the Recovery Act in righting our economic troubles.

We know all too well the results of the previous administration's, the Bush administration's, lack of oversight in the financial sector and lack of focus on the Nation's domestic needs. In December 2007, the Nation entered the worst recession since World War II. Almost 7 million Americans lost their jobs on the Bush administration watch. Housing foreclosures moved to record levels, and millions more struggled to keep their homes.

When Chairman Bernanke, chairman of the Federal Reserve, testified before the House Committee on the Budget in June, he stated that the Recovery Act, specifically the government funding for infrastructure, has had a positive effect on the economy, without which we would be in worse trouble than we are now. Imagine, Madam Speaker, that when critically needed transportation and other infrastructure projects receive funding, they actually create jobs, putting Americans back to work.

Chairman Bernanke also remarked that but for government action the Nation was mere days away from a collapse of the financial sector last fall. For those who have lamented the government's involvement, I would ask if collapse and the chaos that would have ensued would have been preferable to the actions that were taken.

The last time I discussed the Recovery Act on this House floor, I mentioned its positive impact in my district, specifically on the Greater Prince William County Community Health Center. Because of the Recovery Act, we're going to be able to keep that center open. We're going to be able to create new jobs and keep people working. We're going to be able to serve a population that otherwise would not have access to health care in my district.

Today, I want to discuss another positive aspect of that act on a number of critically needed transportation projects in my district.

The Recovery Act provided funding to expedite construction of the Dulles Metrorail project, one of the largest transit extensions in the United States currently. This extension has been in the works for 47 years and will help alleviate our traffic congestion by removing up to 93,000 vehicles off the roads each day. Although the Federal Government previously committed to fund the project, the expedition of the funds made possible by the Recovery Act will allow us to save \$15 million in project costs. We hope we can accelerate funding even more.

The Recovery Act not only will allow jobs to be created more quickly but also the necessary project work to start faster and get this completed earlier than even anticipated.

The Recovery Act also provided funding for the purchase of additional buses for the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission in Prince William County. That funding will provide vital capacity for a currently crowded system, allowing workers a greater opportunity for commuting choices and taking cars off our congested roadways.

As the President highlighted when he visited Springfield, Virginia, in my district to announce the project's funding, the Recovery Act also provided funds for the completion of the long-awaited Fairfax County Parkway waiting decades to be completed. And thanks to the Recovery Act, we're going to be able to complete that parkway and make vital connections with Fort Belvoir, which was greatly expanded under the base realignment and closure process making it one of the largest employers in the region.

While the recovery is by no means out of the woods, we are beginning to see positive signs of recovery. The stock market's risen 40 percent since March. Although the total number of unemployed remains high, new filings for unemployment claims have, in fact, come down.

Retail sales rose 0.5 percent in May and 0.6 in June, the fourth month this year with gains. Consumer confidence is at a 9-month high. The meltdown in the housing market was one of the leading causes of the recession, and it's encouraging to see that housing starts in May were up 17.2 percent over April, and new housing sales, just released yesterday, are up 11.2 percent.

During the traditional business cycle over the past decades, recessions have tended to last 9 months. Madam Speaker, this recession began in December of 2007, 14 months before President Obama took office. While no one solution will cure the recession overnight, the Recovery Act is one piece of the mosaic of actions this Congress has undertaken to restore our Nation's economic health and protect the well-being of the American people. Through the Recovery Act we have seen the positive